

## **APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR PLAYING A SOCIALIZING GAME**

### **Cross-Reference to Related Applications**

None.

### **Statement Regarding Federally Sponsored Research or Development.**

Not Applicable.

### **Appendix.**

Not Applicable.

### ***Background of the Invention***

#### **1. Field of the Invention**

This invention relates to an apparatus and method for playing a socializing game wherein guests at a social function become introduced to one another as a part of the game. Guests participating in the game introduce themselves to other guests hoping to gain assistance in identifying an individual, thing, place, or event described on an identification badge given to them by the host at the beginning of the game. The game disclosed herein provides an excuse for members of the party to talk to one another despite knowing little, or in some cases nothing, about the other person. Even though nothing about this game reveals personal information about the participants, the game is designed to provide a platform through which people are more likely to introduce themselves and begin conversations that will lead to the guests becoming more familiar with one another.

## **2. Related Art**

The prior art is full of inventions disclosing games used for entertainment or educational type purposes. Many of these games involve answering trivia type questions and moving tokens or game pieces around a predetermined path on a playing board. Such examples of these types of games are disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 5,454,569 to Walker, U.S. Patent No. 5,135,234 to Finch, U.S. Patent No. 4,682,956 to Krane, U.S. Patent No. 5,186,467 to Chasin, U.S. Patent No. 4,893,819 to Wright, U.S. Patent No. 6,227,543 B1 to Balog et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,815,976 to Krane, U.S. Patent No. 4,971,561 to Krane, U.S. Patent No. 5,048,842 to Proctor, and U.S. Patent No. 6,045,131 to Adams et al.

The object of many of these inventions is to entertain guests at a social event. However, there is a need in the art for a game that not only provides entertainment to the guests but is also specifically designed to act as an ice breaking device for parties in which guests are unfamiliar with one another. The situation often occurs where an individual will host a social event inviting many guests that have had little or no prior contact with one another. This unfamiliarity leads to awkward situations where the guests tend to separate into groups and only converse with other guests with whom they are familiar. It is the object of this invention to provide a means for entertaining guests at these social events while at the same time acting as an ice breaking mechanism for those guests who have had little contact with one another prior to the occasion. This invention encourages participants to introduce themselves to other guests with the hopes of gaining helpful information for their ultimate task of identifying the individual, thing, place or event described on their identification badge. With this initial introduction completed, the individual guests are more likely to begin a more lengthy conversation at a later time during the event. Through this

game, the guests meet one another while at the same time enjoy the experience of participating in the challenges of the game as well as competing against the other guests.

Another object of this invention is to provide a game that is extremely conducive to allowing large numbers of people to play. While other similar games might be limited to 2 to 6 people, this game can have an unlimited number of players. Additionally, because this game is not played on a board but rather uses identification badges and a master list, it lends itself well to a cocktail type setting where people are standing and constantly moving throughout the room. The nature of this game facilitates guest movement around the party by encouraging guests to talk to one another for the purposes of gaining additional information that they may use in making their ultimate determination as to the identity of the person, thing, place, or event described on their identification badge. In addition, because of the way the game is played, participants can take breaks from playing and can determine the degree to which they wish to participate in the activities. This game can not only be used at social events such as parties but will also prove to be extremely useful in the business world and other corporate type outings where communication and familiarity with the members of the event are important objectives.

A further object of this invention is to provide a game in which no participant is eliminated from the activities. All players are given the opportunity to participate from the start to the finish. Furthermore, there can be multiple winners. As such, several guests will be able to enjoy the satisfaction of solving the mystery presented in each identification badge.

### *Summary of the Invention*

The invention disclosed herein is a game principally designed to facilitate the introduction of guests at a social party. The components of this game include identification badges, identification badge holders, and a master list. Each identification badge contains a short fact summary describing a particular person, thing, place, or event. Located on the back of each identification badge is a unique checking marker. This checking marker corresponds to a master list held by the host which contains the identity of the person, thing, place, or event that is being described on each identification badge. At the end of the game, such list may be referenced by the host to determine if the participant has correctly determined who or what the information is describing. During the game, the participants are encouraged to talk to others at the party in order to obtain assistance in determining the identity of the person, thing, place, or event being described on their identification badge.

Further features and advantages of the present invention, as well as the structure and operation of various embodiments of the present invention, are described in detail below with reference to the accompanying drawings.

### *Brief Description of the Drawings*

The accompanying drawings, which are incorporated in and form a part of the specification, illustrate the embodiments of the present invention and together with the description, serve to explain the principles of the invention. In the drawings:

Figure 1 is a top plan view of an identification badge in accordance with the present invention;

Figure 2 is a bottom plan view of an identification badge in accordance with the

present invention; and

Figure 3 is a view of a master list in accordance with the present invention.

### ***Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments***

Referring to the accompanying drawings in which like reference numbers indicate like elements, Figures 1 – 3 are varying views of the components of the present invention. Figure 1 shows an embodiment of the identification badge 80. Such a badge 80 will generally be distributed to each participant at the beginning of the social event. The identification badges 80 are worn by the participants through the use of identification badge holders 70. In the preferred embodiment, the identification badge holder 70 is merely a clear plastic sleeve attached to a string that is looped around the participant's neck. However, other embodiments of the identification badge holder 70 could include clips, pins, and fasteners.

The identification badge 80 contains a plurality of facts associated with a particular person, thing, place, or event, such as a famous person for example. The identification badges 80 are normally grouped into particular categories. The groupings are generally themed, meaning that each person, thing, place, or event identified in the grouping has a common trait. In one particular embodiment, the facts disclosed are particular to famous individuals. However, the facts may also be associated with non-famous individuals as well. For example, the host may wish to have the identification badges 80 contain facts describing other individuals attending the party. Furthermore, the facts do not even have to describe a person. Such things as animals, historical events, paintings, places, sculptures, songs, cars, planes, etc. may also be described in the identification badges 80.

The facts disclosed can range from well-known facts about well-known topics to obscure facts about obscure topics. As such, the degree of difficulty of this game can be adjusted depending upon the occasion and the intended participants. The game can be

adapted for play by participants varying in age, interest, and educational level.

The facts may take a variety of forms. They may be listed in outline type form, in general paragraph form, or may include a picture, figure, symbol, or other representation. Again, depending upon the level of difficulty desired, the number of facts disclosed may also be adjusted. The more facts given to the participant, the easier the identification process will be. Also, the host has the option to vary the categories or themes used to coincide with the social event and the intended guests. For example, the host of a Super Bowl party may elect to use identification badges 80 that describe football players or past Super Bowl participants while the host of a baby shower may wish to use identification badges 80 describing famous child actors. Any other groupings may be used, including famous political figures, sports figures by sport, authors, composers, contemporary music stars, and country music stars, etc., or any combination thereof.

The identification badge 80 with the identification badge holder 70 is worn by the participant such that the plurality of facts may be viewed by other members of the party. During the course of the game, the participants are invited to initiate conversations with other guests for the purpose of gaining assistance in identifying the name of their unknown person, thing, place, or event. The mingling encouraged by this game will generally lead to debates over the identity of the individual, thing, place, or event being described on the identification badge 80. Such debates translate into further discussion among the members of the party.

The identification badge 80 also contains a checking marker 30. As seen in Figure 2, the checking marker 30 generally takes the form of a number but symbols and colors may also be used. This checking marker 30 will generally be located on the back of the

identification badge 80. The checking marker 30 is used as a reference so that the identity of the individual, thing, place, or event may be accurately checked from the names listed on the master list 90. Anyone wishing to confirm the identity of the person, thing, place, or event being described on their identification badge 80 merely needs to match the checking marker 30 on the identification badge 80 with the same checking marker 30 located on the master list 90. Next to the corresponding checking marker 30 on the master list is the name of the individual, thing, place, or event being described.

The master list 90 merely serves as a template containing all the identities of the individuals, things, places, or events being described in the various identification badges 80. As seen in Figure 3, the master list 90 contains a recording space 60 for the names of the individuals, things, places, or events being described on the identification badges 80. Next to each name is a checking marker 30. These checking markers 30 match the checking markers 30 on the identification badges 80 thus providing an easy way to confirm whether the participant correctly determined the identity of the person, thing, place, or event being described in the identification badge 80.

At the conclusion of the game, in one embodiment, the host will ask the contestants to make a final determination as to the identity of the individual, thing, place, or event described on their identification badge 80. This determination is generally announced to the members of the party so that everyone may know whether the information they gave that participant was accurate. Again, this interaction between the members of the party facilitates the forming of relationships among the guests and gives unfamiliar people another reason to converse with one another. The individuals who correctly guess the identity of the person, thing, place, or event described on their own identification badge 80 are the winners

of the game. In addition or alternatively, the participant may be required to make a final declaration of the identity of the individuals, things, places, or events described on some, or all, of the identification badges of the other participants. In an effort to encourage zealous participation, the host may offer prizes to those who are correct in their final determination.

In view of the foregoing, it will be seen that the several advantages of the invention are achieved and attained.

The embodiments were chosen and described in order to best explain the principles of the invention and its practical application to thereby enable others skilled in the art to best utilize the invention in various embodiments and with various modifications as are suited to the particular use contemplated.

As various modifications could be made in the constructions and methods herein described and illustrated without departing from the scope of the invention, it is intended that all matter contained in the foregoing description or shown in the accompanying drawings shall be interpreted as illustrative rather than limiting. Thus, the breadth and scope of the present invention should not be limited by any of the above-described exemplary embodiments, but should be defined only in accordance with the following claims appended hereto and their equivalents.